

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2012**

Members Present: Lardizzone, Goss, Carroll, Evans, Harden, Lank, McMullen, Newman, Sarg, Showell, Thompson and Weir

Members Excused: Corsa, Keithley, Newstadt and Wasson

Staff Present: Knotts and Peterson

Introduction of Guest(s): Daniel Hendee (VAMC Director) and Ginny Yelland (VAMC), Jerry Stauffer and Myron Smith (DELVETS), Bettylou Evans (American Legion), Sarah Lynam and Mark Mastin (Connections, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program), Michelle Lee (Community Blue Print) and Vickie Bryant and Mike Rowe (LP Lo-DEL)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nation's Flag.

Chairman Lardizzone opened the meeting by speaking about Mr. Davila's retirement event and reporting that our Service Officer in Sussex County broke her hand and the Commission will send her a get well card. He reported that the Executive Director position was advertised nationwide and Mr. Knotts will be the interim director.

Mr. Hendee commented on the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Bridge and spoke about health care improvements at the Wilmington VA Hospital. He spoke about the approval and recruitment of a number of behavior health positions and the facility's ability to function under emergency conditions.

Ms. Yelland spoke about the mobile van and reported that all of their Delaware facilities and personnel remained dry during super storm "Sandy". She also spoke about additional personnel positions that have been added at the Delaware clinics and the current and future use of Telehealth. There were questions about the mobile van which prompted discussion.

Mr. Smith spoke about the "*Toys for Tots*" program and questioned the bonus amount proposed for the OIF/OEF veterans. Commissioner Thompson provided an explanation about the proposed bonus legislation.

Mrs. Evans spoke about the "Thanksgiving for Thousands" program.

Mr. Mastin and Ms. Lynam introduced themselves and spoke about their program and answered questions.

Mr. Rowe elaborated on the Connections' mission and how they interface with other agencies. He briefed about the services he has been providing to veterans since the last meeting he attended. He also spoke about their new van donated by the Longwood Foundation to transport veterans. Mr. Rowe thanked the Commission for their continued support.

Ms. Lee spoke about how one agency came together to help another agency and for being thankful to have so many good organizations to work with. She also spoke about a proposed new website.

Mr. Peterson provided an update for the Delaware Veterans Home and explained the billing and payment system relative to the Medicaid program. He then spoke about the donation list and provided an elaborate explanation of the new Promethean unit. There was discussion about the admissions process, pricing and inoculations. He announced the dates and times for the resident Christmas and New Year's parties.

MOTION BY HARDEN TO ACCEPT OCTOBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY THOMPSON, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Thompson reported that they are currently working to fill the Executive Director's position.

NORTHERN CEMETERY

Commissioner Harden reported that letters went out about the replacement of trees and the raise and realignment project is going very well.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairman Lardizzone said they would push for the three hundred dollar bonus for the OIF/OEF veterans. He also spoke about the proposed Delaware WWII memorial that was approved, but not funded.

Commissioner Showell asked for support of SB 491 by asking organizations and individuals to write their legislators. Discussion followed as to how the Legislative Affairs Committee should be distributing this information.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Lank reported that the Veterans Day Ceremony went very well. The 40 & 8 will be in charge of the Memorial Day Ceremony at the bridge on May 30, 2013.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Evans (American Legion) – He announced their National Vice-Commander will be visiting Delaware during the first part of December and their long time Service Officer, Bob McBride, is retiring.

Goss (KWVA) – He read a passage from a Wounded Warrior newsletter and passed it around.

Harden (WAVES) – She reported their next meeting will be held on December 8, 2012, at which time they will have three new members.

Lank (MOWW) – He reported that Ken Hastings is bedridden and not doing well.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Their Christmas party is scheduled for December 1, 2012, and he thanked Commissioner Sarg for his generous donation. He commented that the Veterans Day ceremony went really well and he attended the Gold Star Mothers Memorial event in Dover at the Kent County building. They are still accepting brick donations and he suggested they take up a collection at the December Commission meeting.

McMullen (AFSA) – He announced the Vice-Chairman of their Legislative Committee will be providing briefings on December 3, 2012 and their Christmas party will be held on December 6, 2012, at the Landings Club, Dover AFB.

Newman (VFW) – He reported that at the beginning of this month, the Military Order of the Cooties went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and laid 400 wreaths. He also shared an encounter with one of the soldiers who patrolled the tomb.

Sarg (MOAA) – The MOAA's annual Leadership Conference was held October 30-31, 2012, in Washington, DC. The Dover Chapter was awarded a five star level of excellence for the second year in a row. Their Christmas Party is scheduled for December 9, 2012, in combination with a "*Toys for Tots*" collection.

Showell (At Large) – She encouraged everyone to attend the Delaware National Guard Holiday Concert at the Grand.

Thompson (MCL) – He spoke about the "*Toys for Tots*" campaign.

Weir (AMVETS) – He met with Representative Short regarding the slot machines and reported on their meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Evans commented on the new ruling the State has put out about gambling and discussion followed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Thompson asked about using some of the Veterans Home Fund donations for use in the Home instead of just letting it sit in the bank. This prompted conversation and it was discussed that the Commission should approve the list first.

MOTION BY LARDIZZONE TO ACCEPT THE VETERANS HOME DONATION LIST, SECONDED BY GOSS, MOTION CARRIED.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Lank presented a \$40 donation check for the Home of the Brave from his grandson.

Commissioner Weir announced that they have officially signed for the new women's home and the new director has been hired for the new women's home.

Mr. Collins commented on the Community Blue Print and fielded questions about the new gambling issues.

Chairman Lardizzone announced that he spoke to the VA Director and the vehicle will be here at the Christmas party.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 18, 2012 (10:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED